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SUBJECT: CORRECTED COPY - AFGHANISTAN: VIGNETTES FROM THE FIELD

REF: (A) KABUL 2939, (B) Kabul 2996, (C) Kabul 3057

1. (SBU) Begin Summary. U.S. civilians in the field continue to work closely with the Afghan Government and their military colleagues to support governance, economic development, and security. New structures and strategies have been integral to placing our people in key positions in the field where they can work through Afghan government structures in close collaboration with coalition military partners, consistent with the Integrated Civilian-Military Campaign Plan for Support to Afghanistan. This cable includes a number of vignettes. A key focus of civilian efforts has been to support the agricultural sector, Afghanistan's leading source of revenue (see Ref A). Many civilians, particularly in the South, have been at the front lines to bring governance and basic services to communities immediately following military operations. Additionally, programs to develop capacity to improve governance and the rule of law are part of the daily activities of most officers in the field, while our development officers are working on a wide-range of beneficial activities. Continued progress on these and other efforts, and on civilian increase, will require additional resources and support from Washington, including for security, mobility and "life support" (Refs B and C). End Summary

Creating Structures for Enhanced Civilian Effort

2. (U) The creation of Senior Civilian Representative (SCR) positions in the East and South in July 2009 has been essential to bringing increased management, direction, and oversight to civilian officers working in the field and has dramatically strengthened the civil-military unity of effort. Since the SCR is the U.S. civilian counterpart to the military commander in the Regional Command (RC) and coordinates the work of all U.S. civilian personnel in his or her region, these officers are able to ensure civilian and military capabilities work together to advance our strategic goals. Similar positions are being created in the North and West to enhance the unity of effort in those regions (septel).

3. (U) An additional area of enhanced unity of effort has been tested in the East at the brigade level through the creation of a "Board of Directors" approach. In that case, the Defense, State, USAID, and USDA lead representatives each serve on the Board and coordinate all activities under his/her assigned line of operation (e.g., governance for State) across the brigade's entire area of responsibility (AOR). Under this "hub and spoke" model, one civilian supports and directs the efforts of company commanders, military civil affairs teams, Agricultural Development Teams (ADTs), and others on governance work in multiple districts throughout the AOR. The State officer is also a source of information for those in her/his chain as s/he provides reach back to the PRT, the Brigade, the regional platform, and ultimately the Embassy.

4. (U) Civilian lash-up at ISAF headquarters is also key to advancing civil-military integration. For example, State and USAID

officers have worked directly with ISAF Headquarters in developing ISAF's operational planning and orders, providing vital civilian input on how to make rapid gains in governance and development. Integrated civilian-military working groups at the Embassy provide real-time guidance to teams in the field on issues from infrastructure to border management. This kind of civil-military collaboration at all levels of the military structure has made a difference. A Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) Civil Affairs Officer told Ambassador Eikenberry that the MEB depends on civilian personnel for their expertise, skills (e.g., governance and agriculture), and the civilian perspective essential for effective counter-insurgency efforts, noting that a conversation between an Afghan civilian and a U.S. civilian is qualitatively different than with a U.S. soldier.

Augmenting the Afghan Agricultural Sector

15. (U) The agricultural sector has been a key area of focus for U.S. civilians. From infrastructure, to capacity building, to training, the work has helped augment Afghan capacity. State and USAID representatives, working with local officials in Helmand, assisted with the construction of Bost civilian airfield. Completion of the airfield in the center of one of Afghanistan's key agricultural regions has resulted in the return of local passenger air service to and from Helmand, as well as a commercial air service hub for the shipment of local agricultural produce. The agricultural voucher and cash for work program is having good positive impacts in the same province (Ref A). In nearby Zabul province, the USDA representative created an extension agent training program for agricultural workers from Zabul's remote districts so that thousands of subsistence farmers would have access to improved seeds and agriculture techniques.

16. (U) In the northeastern province of Nuristan, the USDA representative worked with UN and local experts to train district-level government officials and community representatives from across the province in agricultural, forestry, and natural resource management techniques. In RC-East's Kapisa province, State, USAID, and USDA officers working with U.S. military were instrumental in facilitating formation of a pomegranate cooperative in the critical district of Tagab. As a result of this promising initiative, pomegranate sales could quadruple from \$800,000 to over \$5.6 million. In Kunar to the North, USDA representative supports farmer workshops that are assisting 260 farmers in nine districts this year on orchard management, crop production, composting, forest management, and livestock management.

On the Front Lines: Working in Conflicted Areas

17. (U) Often, State, USAID, and USDA officers are called upon to work in districts just days after military operations have secured an area. A Marine Expeditionary Brigade commander in the southern province of Helmand's Nawa district told Ambassador Eikenberry that civilians were essential to the mission, and that a small number could make a huge difference. A few USAID personnel armed with the right expertise and flexible, fast dispersing programs were invaluable, he said. USAID and State officers in Helmand Province worked closely with the Marines and the UK to develop planning for governance immediately following Marine operations in the districts of Nawa and Khaneshin, and were instrumental in helping the Afghan government (GIROA) reestablish district governance and basic services following the operations. For example, just 48 hours after U.S. Marines had cleared Khaneshin, a USAID rapid response team arrived to begin stabilization efforts. In Farah Province in southwestern Afghanistan, State, USAID, and USDA officers worked in conjunction with the Marines to help local government officials establish basic services as part of the clear-and-hold phase in Golistan and Baqwa districts.

18. (U) In the West in Herat Province's problematic Guzara district, the USAID representative and locally hired deputy field officer are facilitating a joint U.S. Special Forces - Herat Health Department Medical Combat Assistance Patrol (MEDCAP) and potentially a Basic Health Center. The State representative, working with the PRT Commander in the eastern province of Paktya, accompanied Paktya's Deputy Governor Mangal to a shura meeting in the Chamkani district

to help resolve a two-year conflict that has re-emerged on the Paktya/Pakistan Border between the Shi'a Turi tribe and the Sunni Bushara tribe. Joined by UNAMA and UNHCR at the shura, the delegation was successful in helping stabilize the fragile situation through direct interaction with local leadership.

Advancing Governance and Developing Afghan Capacity

¶9. (U) Civilians in the field daily interact with and assist the development of provincial and district governance. A brigade commander in Parwan, adjacent to Kabul, informed Ambassador Eikenberry in September that State Department officers are critical to the success of the brigade's work with the local government. Foreign Service Officers have training and experience not available to soldiers, he said. The work of our officers can take many forms. For example, the State representative at the brigade level in Logar Province in eastern Afghanistan notes joint civilian and military engagements have fostered security, governance, development, and communications, including helping to establish the pilot Afghan Public Protection Program (AP3), which established a local guardian force under the direction of the Wardak ANP Chief and the Ministry of Interior and to revitalize the provincial development councils, which are intended to decide on priority projects. In the remote eastern province of Nuristan, the State officer recently kicked off a "model district" program, which transfers to Afghan officials responsibility for planning, prioritizing, and budgeting for Commander's Emergency Response Program (CERP)-funded projects in their districts.

¶10. (U) Capacity building is a key element of the work of civilians in the field. In the northeastern province of Kunar, USAID and State representatives have worked with the military to train students via the Kunar Construction Company. This program teaches fighting age males marketable job skills such as electrical wiring, plumbing, rebar bending, woodworking, painting, and masonry. A ROL coordinator in the East is working with military partners to facilitate Huqoq legal training, which will train members of the Huqoq courts (a civil law mediation and arbitration system headed by the Ministry of Justice that relies on some elements of the local informal justice system) in order to enhance the Huqoq courts' ability to serve as dispute-resolving mechanisms and to develop public awareness of legal rights and the GIROA role. In the South's Helmand Province, the Rule of Law Coordinator has been working with the PRT, Marines, and UK Military to enhance GIROA capacity to investigate and prosecute insurgent violence. In the northern province of Kunduz, the State PRT Officer works closely with U.S. Police Mentor Teams to design and implement a community-oriented policing strategy focused on getting ANP into the community and building trust and cooperation with the population. In Mazar-e Sharif, in northern Balkh Province, USAID and State officers worked with the Embassy to help the Islamic Investment Finance Corporation (IIFC) establish a loan system that so far has provided some 31,000 Shariat-compliant loans to deserving applicants, amounting to about \$20 million. This program touches many modest families and involves local communities including women in credit unions previously unavailable.

Advancing Women's Issues

¶11. (U) Advancing opportunities and protections for women also has been a key focus of efforts in Afghanistan's provinces. In Kunar, USDA and USAID representatives coordinated with Afghan Conservation Corps to hold training sessions for women on home poultry production. In the northern province of Kunduz as well as in Badghis to the west, State and USAID PRT Officers work with a U.S.-based NGO to secure funding to build a shelter for abused women, a project which will significantly improve the situation of women suffering from domestic violence.

Comment

¶12. (SBU) As illustrated by these vignettes, U.S. civilians and military in the field, working closely with Afghan and coalition counterparts, are advancing U.S. policy in Afghanistan despite formidable challenges. Continued progress on governance, economic

development and security efforts, as well as our civilian increase in the field, will depend in large part on additional resources and continued support from Washington, including for security, mobility, housing and other life support in the field (details provided in Refs B and C). We will provide regular updates on progress and challenges.

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